trend in the behaviour of prices of essential commodities in the first 3 months (April-June, 1989) of the current Financial Year, 1989-90. While there has been increase in the wholesale price index of some commodities like rice,a*rhar, urad,* potatoes, tea, sugar, *gur, groundnut oil, milk jowar, bajra* and chillies; there has been a fall in the price indices of some other essential commodities like wheat, gram, *moong,* onions, *atta,* mustard oil and coconut oil. The wholesale price indices of soft coke, kerosene, soap and matches remained steady during this period. The main reasons for the increase in the prices of some essential commodities is shortfall in production and availability in case of items like sugar and *gur;* seasonality factor in case or rice, *arhar, urad* and potatoes; and price support operations in case of items like groundnut oil. Besides, increased consumer demand has also been exercising an upward pressure on the prices of essential commodities.

(b) A statement showing the month-end retail prices of selected essential commodities at selected centres in January and June, 1988. January and June, 1989 is given in Annexure. *[See* Appendix CLI, Annexure No. 32]

(c) Several measures have been taken from time to time by the Government to contain the rise in prices of essential commodities and to improve their availability. The main thrust of the Government's policy has been to increase production of various essential commodities particularly those which are in short supply. Imports of essential commodities like pulses, edible oils have been allowed. Exports of essential commodities are regulated to ensure increased domestic availability. Public Distribution System is continuosly being strengthened and has been made a part of planning process. Commodities like rice, wheat sugar, kerosene, imported edible oils are distributed through the network of Fair Price Shops numbering 3.51 lakhs. State Governments have been advised from time to time to enforce the provisions of Essential Commodities Act and similar other legislation to take action against hoarders, black-marketeers and anti-social elements. Distribution of commodities is also being made through mobile vans in far-flung areas. With the increased production in 1988-89 and prospects of higher production of essential agricultural items due to expected good behaviour of menscon in 1989-90, it is hoped that it would be possible to contain the rise in prices of essential commodities.

Increase in steel prices

450. SHRI CHIMANEHAI MEHTA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have been revising the steel prices more frequently in recent years; if so, what are the reasons therefor;

(b) what were the prices of different varieties of steel as on 1st January 1987 and all subsequent revisions, till date; and

(c) what are the details of the major beneficiaries of these revisions?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) Steel prices are revised by the JPC periodically to neutralise the increases in the cost of specific inputs such as Coal, Power, Railway Freight etc. Revision in the rates of excise duties and other statutory levies also are reflected in the end price accordingly. The frequency of the price revisions depends upon the occassions on which the price of Coal Power Tariff, Freight rates, Exicse Duties and other levies were revised.

(b) A statement indicating the JPC base prices of different items of steel from 1-1-87 is annexed. *[See* Appendix CLI, Annexure No. 33].

(c) Since the price revisions neutralise the input costs, that too partially, the question of beneficiaries does not arise.

Sale price of rice in tribal areas

451. DR. NARREDDY THULASI REDDY: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state what is the selling price of rice to tribals in various States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI SUKH RAM): The end retail prices fixed by the Government of India of rice supplied under the scheme w.e.f. 25-1-89 at specially subsidised prices in Integrated Tribal Development Project areas and the tribal majority States are as follows:—

(Rs. per quintal)

Rice (Common)	219
Rice (Fine)	279
Rice (Superfine)	300

स्टील अथॉरिटी आफ इंडिया लिमिटेड द्वारा कच्चे इस्पात का उत्पादन

452. श्री शान्ति त्यागी : क्या **इस्पात और खान** मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) वर्ष 1988-89 के दौरान स्टील अथॉरिटी आफ इंडिया लि० की फैक्ट्रियों द्वारा उत्पादित कच्चे इस्पात की मात्रा कितनी है ;

(ख) देश में इस समय कितने कच्चे इस्पात की आवश्यकता है; और

(ग) क्या सरकार ने वर्ष 1989-90 में कच्चे इस्पात का उत्पादन बढ़ाने के लिये कोई योजना बनाई है ?

इस्पात और खान मंत्री (श्री माखन लाल फोतेदार) : (क) वर्ष 1988-89 में स्टील अथॉरिटी आफ इंडिया लि० के संयंत्रों में अपरिष्कृत इस्पात का 84.76 लाख टन उत्पादन हुआ ।

(ख) अपरिष्कृत इस्पात (कच्चे लोहे) की माग का आकलन नहीं किया गया है। तैयार इस्पात के उत्पादन में इसका मध्यम स्तर ही रहा है ।

(ग) वर्ष 1989-90 के लिये स्टील अथॉरिटी आफ इंडिया लि० के संयंत्रों में अपरिष्कृत इस्पात के लिये उत्पादन योजना 93.13 लाख टन की है, जो 1988-89 के उत्पादन से 9 ·1% अधिक है ।

Welfare of the Physically Handicapped persons in Assam

453. SHRI PRITHIBI MAJHI: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether any assistance has been given to Assam State for the welfare of the physically handicapped persons during the 7th Five Year Plan period; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF WELFARE (DR. RAJENDRA KUMARIBAJ-PAI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Details are given in the Statement placed below.

Statement

Funds as detailed below were released to Assam State upto 30-6-1989 during **7th** plan period under the various Schemes of Ministry of Wefare for the Wefare of **the** Handicapped:—

Rs. in lakhs

(i) Scheme of Scholarships for the Disabled Persons .	**16.48**
(ii) Scheme of Assistance to Organisations for the Disabled Persons	5.82
(iii) Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for **Purchase/fittingr** of aids/appliances.	0.15
(iv) Special Cell in normal Employment Exchange for Physically handicapped persons in Jorhat.	0.09